

WHIP 9 – LIGHT STRIP DISKING

FOTG Practice Code 645

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this practice is (1) to reduce grass density and encourage forbs and legumes to regenerate for wildlife food; (2) establish legumes or wildflowers to provide food and cover for wildlife; or (3) establish a firebreak for conducting a prescribed burn.

B. PROGRAM POLICY

Apply this practice to grasslands and idle grassy areas where hard-seeded native forbs may respond or where a prescribed burn requires a firebreak and a permanent green firebreak is not appropriate.

C. ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for cost share, this practice shall:

- Improve wildlife habitat benefits to an acceptable level.
- Prevent degradation of environmental benefits.
- Be maintained for the expected lifespan of the practice.
- Be included in the approved Wildlife Habitat Development Plan.

D. COST-SHARE POLICY

Eligible practice components for this practice shall be determined needed by NRCS and specified in an approved Wildlife Habitat Development Plan (WHDP). This practice shall be cost shared at a rate to meet the minimal needs of the NRCS WHDP.

Eligible Components:

Disking

Eligible Seed

Seeding

Herbicide Application

Cost share shall be applicable to all strip disking treatments scheduled in the WHIP Contract under the limitation that strip disking of the same acreage shall not be more frequent than once every three years during the length of the Contract.

E. REQUIREMENTS

The following are requirements for this practice:

1. The disked area shall not be grazed by domestic livestock for the life of the Long-Term Contract.
2. Strip disking shall be done outside the primary nesting season of April 15 to August 15.
3. Native warm season grass stands shall not be disked until after the second full growing season with the exception of areas planned for disked firebreaks.
4. Strip disking shall be restricted to slopes of less than 8 percent and be placed on the contour at all times.
5. No more than one-third of a field may be disked in any given year. Disked areas may not be re-disked the following two years. Disked strips shall be a minimum width of 20 feet, not to exceed 50 feet. Disked strips shall be separated by undisturbed strips at least two times the width of the disked strip.
6. A current soil test is required for all permanent, herbaceous plantings.

F. ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Consider other resources and environmental concerns (e.g., cultural, wetlands, etc.) as prescribed by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other applicable laws and regulations when establishing this practice. A TN-CPA-25 must be completed for each WHDP.

G. PRACTICE MAINTENANCE

This practice shall be maintained without additional federal cost share for the expected lifespan of the practice. Cost share shall be refunded if either of the following applies:

1. Participant destroys the cover during its lifespan; or
2. Cover fails to provide the desired wildlife benefits during the life of the WHIP Contract, unless the failure is caused by circumstances beyond the participant's control.

H. TECHNICAL RESPONSIBILITY

NRCS shall have technical responsibility for this practice.

I. SPECIFICATIONS

1. Select areas near protective cover (within 150 feet). Protective cover includes woodlands, idle grassy areas, well established native warm season grass plantings, and shrub stands.
2. Disked areas should be disked between the dates of Sept. 1-April 15.
3. Disked areas should not be mowed in the years between re-disking, unless being harvested for hay. Native warm season grass stands may be harvested once per year beginning with the third growing season. Native warm season grass stands may only be harvested between July 1 and August 15.
4. Strips may be mowed prior to disking to facilitate the ease of disking.

Approved Cover Approved plant materials are listed below. Substitutions may be allowed subject to prior approval by the WHIP Program Leader or State Biologist.

| <u>Eligible Seeds or Plants</u> | <u>Seeding Rates (per acre)</u> | <u>Seeding Dates</u> |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Kobe/Korean Lespedeza | 15.0 lbs. | Apr.1-June15 |
| Ladino Clover | 4.0 lbs. | Feb. 20-Apr. 1 |
| Wildflowers (See List Below) | 2.0 lbs. | Apr. 1-June 1 |

Choose at least two of the following species:

Blackeyed Susan
Illinois Bundleflower
Purple Coneflower
Cosmos
Corn Poppy
Upright Coneflower
Purple Prairie Coneflower
Plains Coreopsis
Lanceleaf Coreopsis
Shasta Daisy
California Poppy
Partridge Pea